

THE STUDY OF THE INDIAN FASHION SYSTEM WITH A SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON WOMEN'S EVERYDAY WEAR

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ABSTRACT

The versatile draped silhouettes & heritage craft traditions redefined for contemporary connoisseurs; have further led to the rising acceptance of Indian ethnic/ fusion fashion as a paradigm shift for India to discern and emphasize local inimitability, to create a sense of belonging and stimulate consumption of a culturally promoted “Global-Desi” fashion dictum across cultures. This paper presents the study of major factors contributing to the Indian fashion system interpreting its engagement with the Indian society and also the world.

This research highlights impact of the Indian Fashion system on the Indian society and its meaning. There is continued interest for classical Indian dress silhouettes, heritage textile crafts, accessories; this study concentrates on outcomes through the lens of history, culture, and sociology of fashion. The neue urban tribes and social movements in the post modern era led emergence of the apparel category daywear including workwear, active wear, leisure wear and casual clothing where the code of fashion seems to blend in and emergence of independents style of dressing to suit individual requirements. The Neue urban tribe creates lasting footprints through interpretation of the Indian Fashion System enroute popular culture; interpretation of ideal beauty, power dressing in the 21st century Indians and inde fashion statements.

The semiotic approach to decode the nuance of the Indian fashion system embedded in popular culture through visual media like, family albums, films, magazine articles, red carpets appearance etc. across the 80's, 90's and 2000 onwards. The neue Indian women perceive the sari, salwarkameez, kurti -tunic, as essential inclusions of their contemporary wardrobes as they rendezvous their global counterpart in quest of cool hunting (Fashion Identity), trendsetting. Thus number and variety in types of fashion apparel will have a positive relationship with the role of women in society and their education level, profession and will provide future trend directions for everyday wear.

Operational Definitions

Global-Desi (An Indian term for global yet local Indian, glocal; Neue Indians), Khadi (fabric which is hand spun and hand woven in India, often referred as Fabric of freedom)

Power Dressing: The practice of dressing in a style intended to show that one holds an important position in business, politics, etc. Born in the second half of the 1970s and developed in the 1980s, power dressing is a fashion style that enables women to establish their authority in a professional and political environment traditionally dominated by men.

KEYWORDS: *Draping Style, Timeless Silhouettes, Indian Fashion System, Everyday Wear, Casual Clothing, Workwear, Uniforms, Heritage Textile Crafts, Global-Desi, Khadi, Sari, Salwaarkameez, Indo-Western-Fusion, Stitched Garments & Darzi*

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INTRODUCTION

India is emerging as a strong knowledge economy therefore globally people have been intrigued by India; be it the TajMahal (Tourist destination), Yoga (holistic fitness), Ayurveda (natural healing), Bollywood (Kitch entertainment) where each signifies the favored fashion and lifestyle trends; notably towards Indian fashions, apparel and textiles. India has a rich legacy of heritage textile traditions and wide range of ethnic costume traditions comprising versatile draped silhouettes and classic tailoring techniques; across the subcontinent, suitable to the terrain, weather and the regional socio-cultural influences due to various invasions and the colonial past. There is continued interest for classical Indian dress silhouettes, heritage textile crafts, accessories, and grooming practices among the western ateliers ever since the colonial past; where Indian cotton was the raw material for feeding the British mills during industrial revolution in the early 20th century & Pashmina wool shawls are a luxury fashion classic. This paper dwells upon the Indian fashion system with a special emphasis on womens wear as pursuit of fashion has been perceived to be synonymous with women, and there is opportunity for studying Indian fashion system.

The Indian women have been an integral part of the family, and been confined to home. Social visionaries worked relentlessly towards women's empowerment post independence and emphasized on education as the roadmap to attain it. Till about the 1970's the Indian women dressed in their regional style and patronized the traditional textiles in the neighboring areas. The most sought after textile though was the *Banarsi Sari* for the bridal trousseau in the northern, eastern and western states, but down south the *Kanjeevaram brocades* found favor. Seema Goswami writes, 'In the days before India was divided in the name of religion, wearing a sari or shalwarkameez wasn't a function of which God you worshipped. What you wore pretty much depended on where you lived. In Punjab, women wore the shalwarkameez irrespective of whether they were Hindu or Muslim. And in Uttar Pradesh, Bengal and Bihar, they wore the sari, whatever their religious persuasion'. The sari consumption pattern of the women in rural India has also changed post the 90's, they have given up their traditional saris for cheaper mill made ones inspired by the television soap operas(popular culture) and also for practical purpose of affordability, visual appeal & maintenance.

Research has been carried out on designing and development of various apparel categories and documenting changes in fashion trends and documentation of traditional textiles but little research has been conducted on understanding and documenting the Indian fashion system. This research has highlighted impact of the Indian Fashion system on the Indian society, appropriation and its meaning. How does the Indian fashion system relate to Indian women and industry? The earlier paper on the occasion wear gave the opportunity for exploring the hyper reality through the represented garment. This paper on the everyday wear gave the scope of understanding the worn and real garment in everyday life at home, work or leisure pursuits.

OBJECTIVES

- To study the major factors contributing to the Indian fashion system
- To interpret the Indian fashion system's engagement with everyday wear /casual wear.
- To interpret the Indian fashion system's engagement with concept of work wear and power dressing.

The methodology adopted for this study was to take the semiotic approach to decode the nuance of the Indian

fashion system embedded in popular culture through visual media like family albums, films, communicated through multifaceted media avenues like magazine articles, everyday clothing, runways, across the 80's, 90's and 2000 onwards brings forth the women's Fashion Identity of India. Since there are no appropriate devices which appear suitable to measure the Indian fashion system, it will be necessary to develop such measures, based on the researcher's own observation, understanding and review of secondary sources like books, research papers, magazines and internet. All measures are designed and developed primarily for a population of Indian college women graduates and post graduate programs. Collected pictures of women in everyday life in the 21st century; 12 images were analyzed for visual deconstruction and semiotic approach. Online questionnaires using Google forms (50 respondents) and personal interviews schedule administered to designer to get their views on the topics. A plan of analysis of data was made including methods for scoring and coding. The data was then computed and interpreted.

The Major Factors Contributing To the Indian Fashion System

(Ranavaade and Karolia, 2016) The Fashion System gains momentum when women participate in the mainstream of the society. The Indian aesthetics absorbed the western fashion and technological trends gradually throughout the 20th century. The Indian fashion scene began receiving its due credibility and attention from 80's onwards: hence this paper focuses on the 80's (closed economy), 90's (opening up of the Apparel Industry), new millennium 21st century to understand the Indian Fashion System. The new millennium has seen revolutionary change across the socio-economic diasporas of India due to humongous efforts of the past and the globalization. The Indian women are seeking higher education, step-up from their conventional role as homemakers, mothers, wives along with a professional life and social life independent of the family, due to personal interests and inclinations. The information technology has brought the world closer and sudden economic growth has given the Indian women a great emancipation in terms of their sartorial practices. As these neue Indian women gear to take on various social and professional roles and lifestyles, they have embraced new garments in their wardrobe to meet these roles. The Internet and satellite television not only provides the information on latest world fashion trends but also an access to it even in tier 2 cities of India by means of online E-commerce portals and tele-shopping.

Rama Bijapurkar writes in her article titled *The Whole Six Yards*, (Forbes India, July 2013),

"Over the last two decades, several new 'culture classes' have emerged and older ones have morphed to define themselves through new customs, values, or new degrees of tolerances. The modern young upper class women are a distinct new culture class — at home in miniskirts and in sari and blouse ensembles that sizzle. She dresses like she could be anywhere in the world, in business suits or in jeans, living in homes that look like they could be anywhere in the world, serving food that embraces all cuisines; she shops at supermarkets and malls for her regular stuff, patronizes international and Indian brands, but will go to local markets for entertainment shopping — the opposite of what some other culture classes would do; she has domestic staff like her mother did, only these are more professional; she thinks of herself and her children as global citizens, English is the only family language and her family unit is built to live life king size — free from uniquely Indian traditions and social restraints that she grew up with. Market watchers would like to believe that this is the new Indian mainstream but that is naïve and wishful thinking.

Another large culture class is the rapidly prospering small business woman — shop owner, beauty parlor owner, tailoring establishment owner. She continues to transact in the vernacular with her family, vendors and staff but manages reasonable English with her customers who she needs to SMS; she eschews 'costly' big shops and big brands, and is a big

fan of the 'imported' label. This label stands for 'cheaper', more exciting novelty available through her usual shops, sourced by people like her. Her children are her biggest teachers and modernizers."

These new Indian women have frequently migrated for education and work opportunities from their native cities. These migrations have in a way set them free from the native community also led to an increase in inter-caste marriages, cosmopolitan social groups, and liberation from being known only by one's marital status; there are conservative pockets yet across India. Hence the internet gives them that opportunity of convenience, independence and familiarity to fit-in in the new place and role and ascertaining the upward mobility through the fashion look: **the represented garment**. There are also concerns for ascertaining one's own identity in the new place hence inclusions of ethnic fashions for festive occasions. Limited information of a local market and accepted dress codes and quality (which conventionally was passed down by family and friends in the neighborhood) there is rise in purchase of fashion on online platforms.

Various initiatives by the Indian government towards women's empowerment, and the society being sensitized towards equal opportunities for both the genders has led to both parents/partners working in a family, which gives more disposable income for fashion and a huge spurt in retail brands both in the brick and click format. The open markets have led to democratizing access to fashion both in terms of availability and affordability for people across the socio-economic pyramid. Citing India's demographic and socio-political scenario, the top fashion brands are anchoring on this opportunity and are influencing the Indian fashion system as all levels of the fashion value chain. The economic liberalization of India in the '90s had a curious by-product in Indian fashion.

Fashion is an everyday phenomenon and not restricted to occasion wear like weddings, festivals or formal evening parties. This paper includes the everyday clothes that the women wear at home, at work or at leisure especially during the day. The Indian Fashion system is very dynamic and distinct in a way that the concept of evening wear came to be accepted under the influence of colonial fashions especially for the elite classes in the 20th Century. As per tradition and the dictates of the patriarchal society women were not supposed to step outside the home after sunset. Very few women had access to education and work outside the home were essentially household chores like fetching water or household supplies, farm work, leisure included going to the temple and village fair or bazaar during the day. But the turn of the century in the 21st century the scenario changed for the better for many Indian Women in cities and for a few even in villages and they got better education and they took up work to be financially independent, which required them to step out of their home daily; to gain exposure to the world outside, many of them grabbed the opportunity and there was drastic change in their clothing preference. Fashion became a very interesting tool to carve this new identity as working women; they needed to present themselves more confidently and in command of themselves in the outside world working in pace with the men and doing better than men despite various limitations.

Many women who had limited access to formal education took up professional and technical courses, for tailoring, beautician, housekeeping, retail salesgirls, factory work, social work etc. The women who acquired good education and freedom to work acquired economic independence and professional recognition in their respective domains ranging from teaching, offices, industry, civil services, science & technology, sports etc.

The 21st century Indians are globe-trotters and assimilate fashion acquisitions from their foreign tours along with their identity intact in indigenous dressing, which have been given a postmodern uplift by home born designers. This fusion space that we are living is where the transition from the represented garment to real garment is making the Indian Fashion system so dynamic and interesting.

(Ranavaade, 2013) The sari and salwar kameez has evolved in its form and function and is worn for the following functions:

- **Daywear:** At home/socializing/shopping.
- **Work Wear:** For household chores/ farm work/manual labor /performing arts /prostitutes/ /uniforms /institutional work in offices/schools/colleges/airlines/hotels/police/nursing/ in court of law / Board rooms/ on international deputations, etc.
- **Occasional Wear:** (As Hostess/ Guest) for festivals, religious ceremonies, award ceremonies, formal dinners, weddings, house warming, baby showers, birthday parties, kitty parties, anniversaries, corporate luncheons/dinners, funerals too.

The Indian Fashion System's Engagement with Everyday Wear /Casual Wear

The broad classification and working definitions of Casual Wear for the Indian Fashion system is:

- **Smart Casual:** Generally neat yet informal attire qualifies as smart casual wear.
- **Business Casual:** Business dress has three primary categories: Power Business, General Business, and Business Casual. While Business Casual attire is a recent addition to traditional business dress, it is known as Friday dressing.
- **Active Casual/ Sporty Casual:** This category encompasses apparel for gym, running, rollerblading, biking, tennis, racquetball, golf and other such sports. Most sports have particular items of clothing that support participants in performing well in that game. This category is not about playing a sport, but more about the relaxed look of a spectator.
- **Rugged Casual:** The Rugged Casual category draws garments from the typical apparel of the more outdoorsy sports, like hunting, fishing, backpacking, rock climbing, etc.

(Ranavaade and Karolia 2016) The Indian fashion system is very dynamic and its interpretation has been challenging sighting so many variables that govern and affect it. By the turn of the century India got its first edition of VOGUE, ELLE, GRAZIA, HARPER'S BAZAAR, MARIE CLAIRE etc. having dedicated fashion publications speaking about issues pertaining to fashion to the masses, organized fashion retail, fashion MNC's, and then the on slot of e-commerce, social media and information overload has made the world a small place. In this post modern-era one needs to find instant recognition as well as express ones individuality. Hence finding ones **fashion tribe** is a constant pursuit for both the providers and consumers of Fashion. The Indian fashion system is shaped by providers like Textile craftsmen, local *darzis* (tailors), textile mills, small garment workshops, textile and garment technologists, designers, brands : Indian and foreign, fashion media, stylists, etc. and consumer is ever ready to accept the fashion representations for instant gratification. The technological innovation that has gone in the textile and apparel manufacture doesn't even find mention in a layman's world of fashion, where glamour and beauty take prominence and the represented garment is what matters the most. The real garment and the worn garment are beyond the purview of fashion consumer. However conscious efforts by the providers of fashion towards sensitizing and communicating the story of the fashion product from the fibre to fabric or cradle to grave have given rise to the global awareness of Ethical Fashion. These initiatives may lead towards a more responsible Indian Fashion system and will positively Impact all the stakeholders in the value chain. The world is already

looking at the Indian Fashion System and seeking to find its share.

(Gugnani and Brahma, 2015) According Technopak report 2014, Women Casual Wear Women's apparel market pegged at INR 93,080 Cr in 2014, and is expected to reach INR 2, 49, 710 Cr by 2024 as it will grow at a CAGR of 10.4% during this period. Denim, innerwear and T-shirts represent the three fastest growing categories growing at a CAGR of 18%, 17% and 15% respectively. A women's casual wear collection largely comprises of fashionable skirts, tops made out of chiffon, silk, velvet, cargo, cropped or utility pants, capris and shirts made out of denim, silk and chambray, different washes of denim, leather or denim jackets etc. Despite comfort and effectiveness being considered of utmost importance, the traditional sari and salwarkameez in a woman's everyday wardrobe still hold a major share, it is predicted that other casual wear is likely to replacing the traditional sari and salwaarkameez. Complimentary accessories like scarves, hats, mittens, handcrafted belts etc have made the women's casual wear market much more versatile and dynamic than the Men's Casual Wear market.

<http://www.technopak.com/Files/The-Casual-Wear-Market-in-India.pdf>

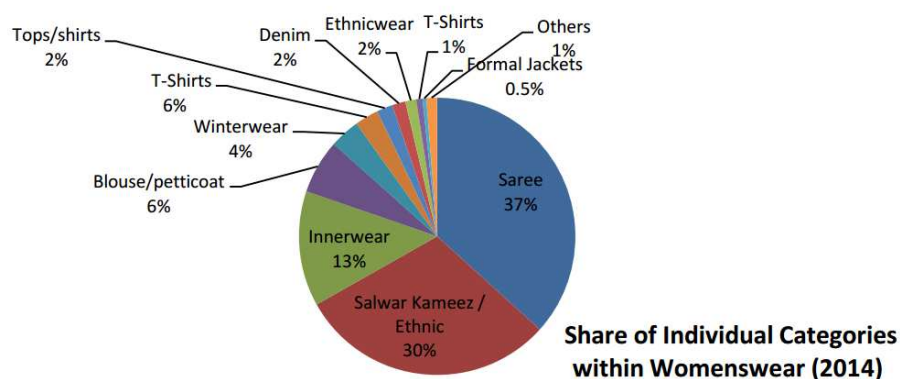


Figure 1

Indian Ideals of Beauty: Indian Mythology, art and architecture has enough examples to show the acceptance of eroticism, however after centuries of cultural transition with the advent of Mughal and Colonial rule saw a lot of changes in the sartorial aesthetics. Cleavages were a taboo till the anvil of global fashion trends till the turn of the century, however midriff bearing maybe acceptable to various degrees, from a modest choli to the bikini blouses and levels and backless blouses paired with chiffon saris, the waist size irrespective. The concept of the ideal body size also has undergone a huge change, where the voluptuous curvy body or often the pear shape body complemented the Indian costumes, the inclusions of the western silhouettes and the concept of size zero figure idealized by the world fashion media did impact self-esteem of many Indian women who are curvy. The new fashion silhouettes also led to acceptance of the correct foundation garments to present the ideal body, hence lingerie got the prominence like never before and due inclusion in the Indian Fashion system. The fascination of Indian society with fair skin has been endless and the beauty industry has harnessed it, however with the endorsement of all skin and hair color campaigns and Indian 'supermodels' & 'beauty queens' acceptance worldwide, there seems to be a slight improvement in acceptance of natural skin color.

In the 21st century there is so much assistance available to women to present their dressed up selves, all the services (Designers/stylist, Makeup and Hair, Photography, fitness trainers, cosmetology, image consultancy etc.) are provided by the Indian Fashion System, which also carries risk of turning all the lovely ladies into look alike; if not clones.

The women adorn themselves in the represented garment look to increase their desirability. However with the need for *lookism* fading off and women finding meaningful pursuits; hope the worn garment and the real garment too gets its due inclusion in the Indian Fashion system.(Ranavaade and Karolia 2016)

Active Wear and Leisure Wear

The overall emphasis on wellness and fitness is increasing after decades of indulgence, many have realized the merits of healthy mind and body is true beauty. Women are taking time out for regular exercise from their multitasking lifestyle. Initially they wore sneakers with Indian clothes like the sari or salwaarkameez for their walk or salwaarkameez for the yoga class. But as they turned to more active pursuits like aerobics, Gym, power yoga, pilates, kick boxing, etc. these all required specific kind of clothing for each activity, specialized the sportswear demand increased. Now there are special clothes for yoga called yoga wear too. The specialized sports bra recommended for such pursuit also has received moderate acceptance, and its benefits still need to communicate to a larger number of women. The comfort level of wearing these active wear apparel varies with women's social background and not so much their self image or bodysize; therefore the women with low social comfort level preferred changing in the specialized clothing at the activity center and wore more socially acceptable clothes on the way.

Many women are opting for active outdoor adventures like camping, hiking, trekking, paragliding, rock climbing etc, hence the demand for rugged and tough outdoor clothing along with specialized clothing for specific sporting activities. Overall rise in interest in sports either by actual participation or adopting the fashion styles of their favorite sportspersons or to support their favorite teams; often to endorse the active lifestyle even if its involvement restricted to being a spectator in stadium stands cheering their teams. The inclusion of stronger and sturdy fabrics like khakhis, drill, flannel, fleece, knitwear etc. in womens wear also was required for the rugged outdoor lifestyle choices of the growing number of women.

Growing number of women had access to independently socialize and hangout by themselves or with their partners, they go shopping, attending fairs and exhibitions, picnics, clubbing, lounging, attending brunches, kitty parties ; these all activities have given them new found freedom to dress in casual manner and express a new fashion look which is carefree. Allowed them to move beyond their social or professional roles, this relaxed casual leisure look does not strict dress code and is more youthful, so often a mother and daughter were spotted wearing similar kind of clothes.

Denim Wear

Denim industry has not only been a major part Indian apparel and textile production sectors, the domestic demand also has increased manifold over a period of time, many women have accepted it as the mascot for youthfulness; essential for day wear and has now trickled up for high end designer denim brands denim collections/labels too. Denim is used from bottom wear today dresses, to accessories, jackets, skirts, etc. Denim is a classic example how the trickle up theory of fashion change from American miner to fashion runways in the west now across the world. Denim wear is available at every price point right from street markets to designer labels and multinational high street brands; worn by sales staff in a mall to the fashion forward elite women across India. It continues to reinvent itself to global fashion trends in washes, finishing, trims, fit, quality etc. and retain its position as cult classic for Indian Fashion system.

(Ranavaade and Karolia 2016) The Salwar Kameez (loose trousers and tunic) suit had been a popular dress in the northern states of India, and has been constant on the fashion radar and has seen cyclic trends and variations across the

decades. It has been popularized by the Bollywood portrayals and the local tailors as fashionable, practical and younger alternative to the Nivi (Modern) Sari which was essentially a dress code of the Modern Era. The acceptance of Salwaarkameez (Post Modern Indian dress code) across India as practical dress code has also been a huge contribution to the Indian Fashion System (Prof. Justina Singh in her doctoral research in the 1970's had predicted this trend), as this garment was not a part of costume tradition, other than the Northern states. Rest of India had various sari drapes or Ghaghraholi (skirt and Bodice) as a costume tradition. By the turn of the century with organized retail, ready to wear Shalwaarkameez was available to suit a faster lifestyle, however many women prefer custom made shalwaarkameez from their local darzi or also from the designer boutiques which came up by the turn of the century. Thus inclusion of the *darzi* or local tailor in the Indian Fashion System is pertinent; for his expertise to sew and fit some amazing sari blouses/choli (the Indian Bodice/corset) and sew custom made trendy salwaarkameez. The Kameez is essentially a tunic silhouette, and the post-modern women who were comfortable in denim jeans were happy to wear the **Kurti** (modified Kurta – to a shorter length and snugger fit). This Kurti is a wonderful example for the fusion space where the comfort of the Jeans and ethnic identity has been combined, also doing away of the long dupatta or being substituted with a shorter stole or scarf. The Kurti also was modified to Kaftaan (Loose Robe without attached sleeves) silhouette. The Kurti (Tunic) trend coincided with the trend of tunic tops in the western fashion. The popularity of the skinny jeans and leggings led to the hybrid jeggings. This also triggered the trend for comfortable Knitted - spandex blend, leggings, substituting the bias cut fitted **chudidarpyjamas** (bias cut fitted Indian trouser variations, often cumbersome to wear due to the desired snug fit). The ready to wear knit leggings are a huge leap towards acceptance of Knitwear in the Indian ethnic / fusion garment category which have been dominated by woven textiles. In early 2000 the knit sari blouse fad did not find much favor eventually. The technological innovations in terms of new fibers, fabric technology, garment manufacturing, dyeing and printing technology, supply chain, and retail formats have affected the Indian Fashion system favorably however its not sufficiently featured in the fashion media communication to the consumers.

The fashion trends for ethnic revival and vintage fashion have led to incorporating the exquisite Indian heritage textiles: beautiful silk weaves and diaphanous cottons, rich hand printed and dyed to perfection and cut in easy practical lines for everyday use and comfort.

Indian Color palette and fashion trend influencers

The color is the strongest element of design which appealed the Indian women, and this an intrinsic part of the environment; surroundings, heritage textile techniques with exquisite color pallets' and variety to choose from each geographic region or craft cluster. The color palette ranges from warm earthy tones to, rich brilliant hues color blocked beautifully, inspired from architecture, colors of nature around them and aesthetic brilliant juxtaposition of weave, print and embroidery in one single garment of the ensemble too. With the influence of the western fashion ideologies, the color pallets were modified to represent a new fashion story for India. The colors palletes at one end became louder due to the invention of new synthetic colored dyes and faster commercially viable printing techniques and association with the Bollywood kitch fashions and TV soap operas. At the work place the color palette was restrained to match the formal business like mood, however the Indian women still preferred their fair share of color and did not switch to neutral or blue-grey tones popular in the west. The red *bindi* and *sindoor* adds color to the face of Indian married women, much before the acceptance of lipstick and rouge in everyday grooming practices of the Indian women. One found co-ordinated salwaar suits, in monotones or contrast or print clash with varying levels of embellishments.

(Banerjee & Miller, 2003) Surveying some of the major arbiters of taste, from politics, film and television soap opera. These compliment the development of branding and the impact of major companies. The big players in the commercial sector seek to influence what we wear through manufacturing, advertising and sponsoring powerful and seductive images that people want to emulate. The eccentric sari shopper is never likely to encounter the kind of fashion hegemony which means that in Western markets flares or long jackets may disappear entirely if they are not part of that season's styles. While 'fashions' in saris do happen, they are likely to guide only a small proportion of new sari buying each year. Women may buy one sari which is 'trendy', but will usually ensure it is inexpensive in case it is no longer wearable the following year. More expensive saris are rarely bought according to such short-lived trends, for as we have seen, the influences on taste go far beyond the latest soap operas to include fondly remembered national leaders and the timeless classics of a vast legacy of films, as well as regional, family and personal traditions.

(Ranavaade, 2013) Another prevalent practice of: adapting trends in western fashion to Indian ethnic apparel: in terms of color, fabric, surface ornamentation techniques, cut and silhouette. Many efforts to apply western trend forecast for Indian ethnic apparel, without much tweaking and understanding of Indian consumer preferences have resulted in poor acceptance of those styles.

Some good examples are a modest choli's adaptation to a slinky spaghetti strap, halter neck, bikini top, corset, bustier, jacket inspiration, leaving nothing to imagination. The Crop top trend can also be attributed to the fact that baring midriff is acceptable in India due to the ethnic costumes like sari and ghaghra choli. Customized petticoats for the sheer sari draped seductively.

(Ranavaade, 2013) The modern Indian women are fitness conscious & work out hard and are unapologetic about flaunting their assets in a flirtatious sari drape or may be at times they may succumb to peer pressure in pursuit of the elusive size zero. This could be one of the reasons for the trend of diminished use of Indian heritage textiles in saris for the young Indian women, which requires innovative options in terms of fall, drape, weight, visual appeal etc. which they will like and include in their wardrobe.

The Indian woman has adopted and assimilated a great variety of apparel in her wardrobe like the sari, the *ghaghra choli*, *shalwarkameez*, western fashions like skirts, trousers, denims, dresses, gowns, sportswear etc. Along with occasion appropriate clothing for each of the roles she has acquired as a mother, daughter, wife, sister, friend, student, co-worker, boss, homemaker, entrepreneur, global citizen. etc. often replacing the dupatta which was an intrinsic part of Indian ensembles, be it the ghaghra choli, or salwar kameez suit, is accessorizing skirts and tops and pant suit, as it meets the modesty and social acceptance needs. The sari alone has a market size of INR 24,020 crore = **USD 4.920 billion**, which forms almost 41% of womens wear market in India (Technopak, 2010). Thus number and variety in types of fashion apparel will have a positive relationship with the role of women in society and her education level, profession.

Data interpretation of the online interview schedule administered to a sample size of 50 respondents for this study. Majority of respondents (81.6 %) were in the age group of 25-30 Years, (16.4%) respondents were in the age group of 30-35 years. Highest number of respondents (44.2%) were employed in private sector, (28.8%) were students, (18.4%) were self employed and (8.5%) were home makers. Highest number of respondents (46.0%) were from the Apparel/textile field, (17.2 %) each in retail and academics sector, and remaining 4 sectors employ (9.2%) each. Highest no of respondents (48.2%) had annual income range of 3-6 Lakh INR, (30.8 %) upto 3 Lakh INR, (13.0%) earn 6-9 lakh INR, and only (8.0 %) earn the maximum of 9- 12 lakh INR. Majority of respondents (63.5%) are unmarried and (36.5%) are married.

The respondents have marked media as the highest factor for clothing selection, followed by function, then age, then education, followed by economic status and the least as social status. Majority of the respondents (52.4%) respondents confirmed having a different wardrobe for everyday wear and special occasions. Marginal (16.2%) respondents preferred wearing the same kind of clothes everyday and at workplace.

The respondent preferences in percentage was found as Semi formals(20%),Tough casualwear (12%), Casualwear/ leisure wear (23%)Work wear formals(45%).

Highest no. of respondents (60%) preferred wearing denims/cottons trousers/jeggings and tops /Kurtis for everyday wear. Salwar kameez (sets and separates) was preferred the most for work wear by 60% respondents, and (20%) prefer it for casual outings and at home each. (40%) respondents wear sari for work and (30%) respondents prefer it for casual outings. The percentage of respondents opted for formal trouser/skirt and shirt- jacket for work wear is (26%) despite the percentage of women wearing trousers and other bifurcated garment for other everyday use is much higher. The trend of wearing skirts and shorts is increasing in the metros as the certain parts of society widened acceptance for bare legs.

Dresses (formal and casual) were preferred by (33%) respondents for work wear and for other everyday wear. The respondents used a variety of accessories like belts bags, scarves, stoles, caps, jewellery etc to create distinct look in their everyday wear. (28%) respondents preferred the no accessory look. Accessories are most preferred by (44.2%) respondents for any relaxed casual /leisurewear look for mix and match styling, followed by business casuals by (20%), as well as by (15.8%) for workwear formals and minimal (10%) prefer it for denim wear and tough casual look each.

The indo-western fusion style in terms of tunics /kurti, variety of bottom wear options like dhoti pants, harem pants, duppatas to scraves/stoles etc. The kolhapurichappals and jutis are the most common casual footwear preferences with the fusion look.

The Indian Fashion System's Engagement with Concept of Work wear and Power Dressing

Working outside of home required women to adopt the more professional and presentable mode of dressing, which was comfortable for the city commute, modest enough to show some authority, social mobility (home to workplace), the work wear requirements of women were very unique to nature of work and individual preferences also were influencers; the nature of work could vary from stepping out for household chores/ farm work/manual labor /performing arts /prostitutes/ /uniforms /institutional work in offices/schools/colleges/airlines/hotels/police/nursing/ in court of law / Board rooms/ on international deputations, etc. Work wear ranges from casual to formal and includes business dress, has four primary categories: Power Business, General Business, Business Casual (Friday dressing) and uniforms. Uniforms are prescribed way of dressing and often given by the employer to the employee, for building sense of belonging and teamwork within the organization; it served as a brand extension for the employer- employee and conveys a message to the observer about their professional role. Uniforms often have meet some functional and safety requirements besides just psychological association. The survey results of this study indicated marginal (16.2%) respondents preferred wearing the same kind of clothes everyday and at workplace. The respondent preferences in percentage for investment in clothing purchases were highest in Work wear formals (45%).Though the highest percentage of respondents (60%) preferred wearing denims/cottons trousers/jeggings and tops /Kurtis for everyday wear. Salwar kameez (sets and separates) was preferred the most for work wear by 60% respondents, only 40% wore sari for work, 33% respondents wore dresses for

work wear. The percentage of women opting for formal trouser/skirt and shirt- jacket is (26%). Thus the study indicates that the Indian ethnic clothes have been accepted as formal work wear across industry sectors and levels along with rising acceptance of trousers, dresses and skirts.

(Banerjee & Miller, 2003) In the chapter on 'The working Sari', growing number of urban women are also working outside the home (rural women have, of course, long been working in the fields), and this can require a different approach to dress and appearance. Here, profession and career are often more important influences than age, religion or caste. This other 'look' may in turn upset mother-in-law or husbands, and so part of dilemma of being a working woman in India is juggling the expectations of the workplace with sensibilities of those at home. The sheer level of disdain experienced by many women may paradoxically become a positive contribution to women developing a nuanced sensibility about socially appropriate dress. Precisely because everyone knows the difficulties and problems, a person who shows accomplished skill in making the sari serve her will and express their purpose is much appreciated. This is especially the case where this authority appears to be effortless, with the garment worn with complete confidence and lack of anxiety. This is what one woman described to the authors as the '**carefully casual**' look. Most women felt that with western clothes or the shalwarkameez, the garments largely take their shape from the tailoring. As a result, they do not communicate anxiety or inability as easily, even if you are not fully comfortable in them. Wearing the sari was far more demanding, risky and vulnerable, a high-wire act where nervousness was transparent. But for the same reason, a successful performance could give you an aura and authority that tailored garments could not. A confident sari wearer notes that her colleagues try to disparage her, suggesting her sari is archaic. But she responds that this is testimony to its power. The best evidence in support of the '**power sari**' was the number of men who complained that in the politics of the office they were at a distinct disadvantage, because they could not compete with the power the women conveyed through their saris.

The concept of modesty is subjective to the cultural norms of the society, and India is ambivalent in this regard where deep backs and sleeveless blouses and bare midriff at workplace seemed to be acceptable, but not many workplaces are open to the idea of short skirts and cleavage showing at workplace. Many conservative colleges in India have tried banning jeans for the lady students, considering it to be against their culture, in December 2016 a group of girl students in Indian state of Kerala wore folded *lungi*'s (Lungi In Kerala a traditional garment like sarong worn by men, often folded half till the knee) and went to college after the jeans ban to drive the point with the authorities that its irrational to ban jeans.

The transition in uniform of Indian airline, hospitality industry and the Global inc. is an indicator of this "global Desi" fusion space where the sari and blouse drapes have become more functional and crisp. Some places have adopted the androgynous look of the Bandgala jacket with trousers or skirt and teamed with a scarf or stole. And few have moved to western silhouettes totally with hint of Indian color palette or traditional textile.

Postmodern Uplift by Home Born Designers

The versatile draped silhouettes & heritage craft traditions redefined for contemporary connoisseurs; have further led to the rising acceptance of Indian Ethnic/ fusion fashion as a paradigm shift for India to discern and emphasize local inimitability, to create a sense of belonging and stimulate consumption of a culturally promoted "*Global-Desi*" fashion dictum.

The January 2016 Issue of Vogue India, the feature titled "The Young and Restless" mentioned that by 2020 India will be world's youngest nation, and therefore Stylist Anaita Shroff Adajania styled looks to represent this Young nation,

the garments have been created by young and restless Indian designers labels, like Quirk box, Ka:Sha, Bodice, Patine etc. who have figured out their tribe and are being mentored by the Indian fashion system to create exciting ensembles.

The 21st century Indians relate to indigenous dressing, which have been given a postmodern uplift by home born designers. Also in today's age of e-commerce fashion is available at the click of a button from the most affordable mass fashion to custom made ensembles from any corner of the world. The February 2016 Issue of Vogue India, the feature titled 'Net Worth' mentioned the e-commerce portal www.redsisterblue.com which is label for western line of Khadi clothing. The entrepreneur Nanda Yadav mentions that she is not a modern day nationalist, the label was started for the love of the khadi fabric properties, and she added that Khadi is more breathable than pure cottons. She has always been particular about color, cuts, lengths and wearing khadi. This postmodern take on Khadi for western clothing is an interesting perspective on the Indian Fashion system.

The new age influencer like E-commerce, social media, celebrity bloggers etc. have accelerated the fashion change and brought about eclectic mix in everyday wear fashions. Face book closed group pages by 2 Indian Women Anju Maudgal Kadam and Ally Matthan #100SareePact To Revive Six Yards of Memories and another initiative #Registr of Saree. Face book closed group page "Do100 Saree pact"# "Building narratives with the memory attached to each saree in everyday life. What is your saree story?" -11,339 members till 7/01/16. Age group: 22- 65 years onwards.6 Yard tradition - Infy 100 saree pact started in Bangalore has crossed the international borders.

Himanshu Verma a saree activist, organizes The Saree Festival pan India; all pervasive love affair with the drape, in bringing together the vast richness of styles, materials, traditions, techniques, experiments, vocabularies, sensibilities, that can all achieve fruition under the never ending swirl of the Saree. The saree festival showcases some exciting new work; in the realm of the saree and encourage the next rung of Saree makers to enter the fray. He has coined catch phrases like "Jai Saree" to promote the sari with an objective to create the Saree sans frontieres!

International designers like Yves Saint Laurent, Karl Lager field, Zandra Rhodes etc and brands like Hermes, East, have been inspired by Indian silhouettes and heritage textiles and have created some spectacular design collections. A lot of foreign designers travel to India for inspiration ; their itinerary includes diverse natural beauty form North to south and east to west different craft clusters, Calico museum in Ahemdabad, places of historic significance, bustling Indian streets/cities etc to experience the food, color, festivals, culture, spirituality, so is the case with a lot of foreign tourists. Few Indian textile master crafts persons who have donned the hat of a designer or have leveraged their craft and received due attention and business from connoisseurs of hand crafted Indian apparel and textiles. The first lady of America Michelle Obama whois a known fashion icon, had visited India in January 2015 was gifted exquisite Banarasi brocade sari and she also patronizes designers of Indian origin. Indian designers like Rahul Mishra, Naeem Khan, BibhuMohapatra etc. have received a lot of acclaim for their innovative work and brought more credibility to Indian fashion system.

Many Indian designers like Manish Arora, RituBeri, AshishSoni have had shows in Paris and New York. Rocky S did different saree drapes for the Pussy Cat Dolls. Judith Leiber has tied up with Suneet Verma for designing handbags for them. India has been an inspiration for many Western designers. Jean Paul Gaultier took inspiration from the saree and created an entire collection in 2008 for Hermes. He also used Indian motifs on scarfs. Louis Vuitton came up with the Bindi Sunglasses. Indian textiles, embroideries and printing techniques have been seen on the ramp in Paris and New York. The Henna tattoos, Bindis, stole drapes, flowy cotton skirts, Indian Gems and Jewellery have all become common in the West. In a sense India has truly arrived in the global fashion market with luxury brands like Chanel, Paul Smith, Louis

Vuitton, Burberry setting up shop in India. The incorporation of Indian apparel silhouettes and heritage Indian textile techniques by international fashion designers and brands has a positive relationship with the recognition of India as an emerging super power and liberalization in trade policies, improved infrastructure and promotion of Indian tourism.

Trickle up And Down of Everyday Wear Fashion Styles in the Indian Fashion System

The sari worn by women farm work involving manual work were shorter in length and width for ease in working and maintaining, designers like Sabyasachi introduced this short sari as the Chotu sari for the contemporary carefree fashion forward women. The exquisite handcrafted leather chappals from Kolhapur have been accepted across the socio – economic sections of women, so much so they have become synonymous with any open toedchappal style footwear, irrespective of its place of origin or material used for making the footwear. Likewise the humble handcrafted leather jutis from Punjab and Rajasthan have received a post modern uplift for fashion connoisseurs across the globe, as they serve the purpose of fancy and closed footwear style like the ballerina shoe. With acceptance denim in women's wear, the t-shirt was soon to follow and it continues to be an intrinsic part in various, fits, styles, lengths, price points as relaxed, comfortable everyday wear, often co-ordinated with Indian bottoms like skirt, Patiala -shalwar, dhoti pants too. The Kameez is essentially a tunic silhouette, and the post-modern women who were comfortable in denim jeans were happy to wear the **Kurti**(modified Kurta – to a shorter length and snugger fit). This Kurti is a wonderful example for the fusion space where the comfort of the Jeans and ethnic identity has been combined, also doing away of the long dupatta or being substituted with a shorter stole or scarf. The Kurti also was modified to Kaftaan (Loose Robe without attached sleeves) silhouette. The Kurti (Tunic) trend coincided with the trend of tunic tops in the western fashion worn with jeans, leggings, jeggings, knit chudidhar pyjamas, palazzo pants, skirts etc.

Globally people have been intrigued by India and all things Indian. Indian apparel and textiles the color Khakhi has its origin from the word “*Khakh- meaning dust*”, the Jodhpur Pants have originated from the city of Jodhpur in Rajasthan, which were traditionally the riding breeches for the game of Polo. Exposure to technological developments, have further led to the rising acceptance of Indian crafts, textiles and apparel. International celebrities like Liz Hurley, Angelina Jolie, Theresa May, have taken a fancy of the Indian drape draped silhouettes and heritage textile crafts.

Table 1: Indian Fashion System Everyday Wear

SR.NO	APPAREL CATEGORY	SARI	SALW-AR KAMEEZ	BOTTOMS/TROUSERS	TOPS	SKIRTS	DRESSES	ACCESSO-RIES	FOOTWEAR
1	FOUNDATIO NGARMENTS			BRA, PANTY, SLIPS, CHEMISE, CORSET, THERMAL WEAR					
2	ETHNIC OUTER GARMENTS			CHUDIDAR, SHALWAR, STRAIGHT TROUSERS VARIATIONS, LEGGINGS	KURTA, KURTI & CHOLI VARIATIONS	GHAGHRA	NA		CHAPPALS, JOOTI S, SANDALS
3	OVER GARMENTS			SHAWLS, CARDIGANS, SWEATERS, JACKETS, CAPE, PONCHO, PHIRAN, TRENCH COATS, SHERWANI, RAINCOATS				UMBRELLAS	GUMBOOTS & SNOWBOOTS
4	SEMI FORMALS/SM ART BUSINESS CASUALS			FULL LENGTH JEANS, COTTON PANTS , JEGGINGS	FORMAL SHIRTS, TOPS, POLO T- SHIRTS, VEST, JACKETS	TAILORED D SKIRTS	TAILORED DAY DRESSES	SCARVES, HANDBAG, LAPTOP BAG	SEMI-FORMAL SANDALS AND SHOES
5	TOUGH CASUALWEA R, RUGGED OUTDOOR			DENIM JEANS, CARGO PANTS, OVERALLS, DUNGREES, JEGGINGS	T-SHIRT, CASUAL TOPS, VESTS, DENIM JACKET	DENIM OR STURDY COTTON SKIRTS	NA	BACKPACKS, SLING BAGS, CAPS, HATS	CANVAS /SPORTS SHOES, BOOTS, FL OATERS
6	CASUALWEA R/LEISURE WEAR			DENIM JEANS, COTTON PANTS, JEGGINGS, LEGGINGS, CROPPED PANTS, SHORTS, JUMPSUITS, DUNGREES	T- SHIRT, KURTA, KUR TI, SHIRTS, CASUAL TOPS, SHRUGS, VEST , JACKET	TRENDY SKIRTS	TUNICS, DAY DRESSES, KA FTAN	TRENDY HANDBAGS, CAPS AND STRAWHATS	TRENDY SANDALS, SHOES CHAPPALS, JOOTI S, FLIP FLOPS, FLOATERS
7	WORKWEAR FORMALS			FORMAL SUITS, TROUSERS	FORMAL SHIRTS, TOPS, POLO T- SHIRTS, VEST, JACKETS	TAILORED D SKIRTS	TAILORED DAY DRESSES	SCARVES, HANDBAG, LAPTOP BAG	FORMAL SANDALS AND SHOES
8	SPECIAL UNIFORMS			SPECIFIC TO EACH INDUSTRY AND COMPANY					
9	ACTIVE CASUALS			TRACK PANTS, LEGGINGS, SHORTS	T-SHIRTS, GANJEES, SWEATSHIRTS,	VERY SHORT SKIRTS OR SKORTS	VERY SHORT DRESSES FOR TENNIS/ SKATING ETC	GEAR SPECIFIC TO EACH SPORTING ACTIVITY	SPORTS SHOES SPECIFIC TO EACH SPORTING ACTIVITY

From the in depth qualitative and quantitative study backed by observations & results it can be concluded that the number and variety in types of fashion apparel will have a positive relationship with the role of women in society, socio-political scenario, globalization, economic growth, education levels. The adoption of ethnic fashion styles in everyday wear is an expression of ethnic roots in the Post modern era. The formal workwear includes sari and salwaarkammeza long with western suits with the expansion of the Indian fashion system over the decades and has a positive relationship with the attitude of the Indian society towards fashion. The Bollywood and satellite TV have influenced on the everyday wear fashions to large extent. The Indian fashion system is directly dependent on the educational level, social status of the women in society, and economic independence and disposable income.

The colonial legacy of tea parties, picnics, outings in the countryside have led to the category of “daywear” in the Indian fashion system, which is casual and airy for the Indian tropical climate. The day dresses and crop tops have been include in the Indian fashion system. A scarf or stole is often replacing the dupatta which was an intrinsic part of Indian ensembles, like salwar kameez suit, is accessorizing skirts and tops and pant suit, as it meets the modesty and social acceptance needs. The Indian Fashion System’s expansion has a positive relationship with Fashion MNC’s and Bollywood productions partnering with Indian and expanding their market share in India, having a huge youth population (demographic advantage). The Internet has made the Indian fashion more dynamic and women adopting fashion across

borders rapidly.

CONCLUSIONS

The Indian shalwaarkameez and sari are different from the other national costumes like the Japanese Kimono and the Scottish kilt; everywhere one goes in India one will find women clad in these two classic styles. The fusion space in which Indian silhouette inspiration as well as Indian textile inspiration are interpreted in the form of Tunic kurta, vests, scarves and stoles, day dresses, skirts, t-shirts, cotton sari paired with T-shirt aid in creating an interesting contemporary wardrobe comprising worn and real garment for the post modern women for everyday wear.

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